

Introduction

Travel direction on public lands in the Gunnison Basin falls into three categories.

- 1) Closed — areas where motorized/mechanized travel is not allowed (like the West Elk, Raggeds, and Powderhorn Wilderness areas)
- 2) Restricted/limited to designated roads and trails.
- 3) Restricted/limited to **established** roads and trails.

This brochure is directed primarily at category 3.

The New Restrictions

- All motorized and mechanized travel is restricted to established routes. An established route:

Is one that exists on the ground as of January 12, 2001 as portrayed in respective agency's inventories, or

Is easily recognizable on-the-ground as a route and has been traveled routinely by users as of January 12, 2001.

- Cross-country travel by wheeled vehicles is not permitted.
- Visitors are permitted to travel up to 300 feet off roads and trails to camp, picnic, and gather forest products like firewood and rock, providing resource damage does not occur and there are no signs prohibiting the activity.
- Travel 300 feet off roads and trails is not allowed for hunting or game retrieval; however, nonmotorized game carts are allowed off route.
- Use of routes is restricted to the mode of travel consistent with established use. This means that ATVs and jeeps may not travel on single-track trails.
- Wheeled-vehicle travel is not allowed on routes that have been signed as closed, blocked, ripped or otherwise decommissioned unless officially signed as open to those modes of travel.

When in doubt, take another route.

Where do the restrictions apply?

The new restrictions apply to all public lands that were open travel for all or part of the year. This includes areas shown as green on the 1984 Gunnison Basin Area Visitor Map, and yellow areas designated with a ③, ④, or ⑤. On the new 2002 Visitor Map, these areas should be delineated as an (A) or (D). The restrictions also apply to BLM lands in the North Fork Valley east of Highway 65 and north or east of Highway 92.

The new restrictions also do not apply to private or State lands or to snowmobiles, snowcats, and other over-the-snow travel.

What's the difference between a designated route and an established route?

A designated route should be shown on the Visitor Map. These routes are usually signed with a FS or BLM route marker and number. The marker may show what types of uses are allowed on the route. The new restrictions do not change any existing travel direction in areas that were managed as designated route areas prior to the new restrictions.

Established routes may or may not be shown on the Visitor Map and may or may not have a route marker. Game trails or cow paths are not considered established routes; it is not legal to drive on them with motor vehicles or mountain bikes.

Why Did The Agencies Impose These Restrictions?

Unplanned routes often result in unacceptable resource damage. The primary benefit that we hope to see from these restrictions is a halt in the creation of new routes. Other benefits include an improvement in the user's experience, and a decrease in erosion and the spread of noxious weeds.

These are interim restrictions. Future route-by-route planning will determine which routes remain open and what modes of travel they will be open to. This planning will be done with extensive public involvement.

Good Practices Wherever You Are

- Avoid driving on routes when wet.
- Do not drive around boggy areas.
- Avoid travel up steep slopes.
- Leave gates as you find them.
- Motorized vehicles should yield the right of way to bikes, horses, and hikers.
- Pack out what you pack in.

Are These Established Routes?



YES, both these routes would be considered established routes. Though there is some vegetation returning in the photo on the right, the route is still showing evidence of routine use.



NO, the routes in these photos would not be considered established routes. In the photo on the left the amount of revegetation indicates that the route is not receiving routine use.

In the photo on the right, a vehicle has compacted the vegetation, but it has not received enough use to be considered routine. With no further use, the vegetation should spring back in the near future.



What Does Restricted to Current Mode of Travel Mean?

This is an obvious single-track trail that someone attempted to travel on with an ATV or jeep. Only mountain bikers, motorcyclists, hikers, and horseback riders should be using this trail.

